

O C H O

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Making his first appearance in OCHO

Horace Carlton

THIRTY MILES WEST OF CHICAGO

paint chips slowly.
It's so still you
can almost hear it
pull from a porch.

Cold grass claws
like fingers in a
wolf moon. A man
stands in corn bristles

listening, watching
as if something
could grow from
putting a dead child

in the ground

MIDWEST

all that sky
a flat black
with only a cat's
eyes blazing

people wait alone.
Wind changes in
the cornleaves.
People hear it like

a chord augmented.
Houses chip slowly
stranded in snow.
Only the sky is fast

Lyn Lifshin

MONET'S *LES NYMPHEAS*

the long curved
room, the walls

starting to
shimmer, breathe

A Chinese girl
sitting on the stone
bench next to me,

dazed, smiling

The lilies moving
into both of us

VIOLET JELLY

picking the leaves
Monday early in
a cool rain huddled
in wet sweatshirts.
Hours in the grey,
knees and fingers
numb. Our skin
smells of violets
while they soak
in the red pan
overnight till we
boil the green.
Then the pectin
turns them lilac.
We pour them into
glass, amethyst
the sun comes thru
on the window
after snow

THINGS THAT SHINE IN QUEBEC CITY AS THE SUN FALLS

light on the ball
of glass, on
the puddles
under the Hilton.

The St Lawrence glows,
the flag poles,
edges of buildings.
A yellow car in the
salmon light.

Lights are starting to go on.
Green copper roofs glow,
shadows of clouds
over sailboats
on the water.

The smell of leaves,
cool wind blowing.

The water
a ripple of light
like a flag of glass.
Diamond ripples.

I think of Diamond Head,
light that seemed
magical in a strange
town. The only
familiar sign is
one that says
Kresge's. Light
that will glow
when what
seems to
might not.

Green diamonds,
red diamonds,
blue diamonds
starting to cover

Lyn Lifshin

BLUE SLEIGHS

December, the
water moves
dark between the
snow dunes in ten
thousand hills
pulling light
around the
black stones, a
sound to sleep
and love by
like bells
running thru the
children's sleep
when they dream
of blue sleighs

SEPTEMBER 26, 1996

this morning the pond
looks like marble. Rose
and charcoal dissolving
to dove, to guava, rouge.
Only mallards pushing
holes in the glass, so
unlike the pond, deep in
trees, almost camouflaged,
startling as coming upon
your reflection in a mirror,
just there under trees and
the wooden bar and the
driftwood benches blackly
jade with pines dripping
into it, shadows close to
my hair. What I didn't have
blinded me so I hardly saw
the small birds, blue,
pulling out of moss and
needles as if reaching into
the dark for their color

MID NOVEMBER

when the black ducks come,
winter opens, a kick pleat in darkness

Eyelash fringe of ferns on shore.
Late fall thunder after a long
Indian summer.

Branches creak. Muskrat slither into
the pond like a stone the tide covers
in the glow of a stranger's flashlight

LATE NOVEMBER

one minute, the sun was out, it was fall.
Geraniums under a quilt last night, a
blotch of red opening.

On the front step what looked like lint
has small pink claws and feet.
Next the sky was the color of lead.

Geraniums under a quilt last night
like a child you've tucked in
or a body wrapped in the earth under leaves.
In the swirl of sudden snow, what
was left of the headless fur blows west

Like a child you've tucked in
whatever was living, a just born
squirrel I suppose, hardly a living thing
except for feet.

In fifteen minutes, the light came
back, cars stopped sliding

Whatever was living. Or just born
must have felt the wild snow was a warning.
I thought of the lover wrapped in dark
cloth and left in the leaves while, not knowing,
I took a ballet class. The geraniums

are still under a blue quilt this Tuesday.
One minute the sun was out, it was fall

Siamese Cat

Erica Fabri

She said she could teach me to dance like a swimmer. To move like a fishtail. Graceful as angelfish. Limber as jellyfish. She turned out the lights. I could only see by the thin beam the window let in. The pad soles of my bare feet could not make more than a light thump sound. She raised and thrusted and I followed. We wheeled and ticked. Our arms surfed like fabric. She said, *be scissors, tongs, snakes, clock hands, sprockets, pendulums*. She laid me down and opened my legs like a fan.

She asked me why I was starting to cry. I said I was afraid of her dying before me. In this half-light I could see her wrinkles becoming even deeper slits. When she leaned over me the skin from her neck dangled. When she took me by the wrists and opened me up I could feel how soft my skin was compared to hers.

She told me she'd play music that would turn us into cats. I saw that she was growing whiskers and black diamond shaped pupils. She began to dance like a hunchback, like a tribal woman around a fire. Silver-white hairs began to appear all over her back. Her hands changed shape. Her feet, slapping against the floor, turned black.

Erica Fabri India in the Dark

Sometimes, she comes to me in the dark.

She is very shy because she hasn't

shaved her legs all week. I say,

don't be silly, you are radiant

like the moon

. She smokes a joint,

in a dummy way, clams right up

when she hears the staircase say:

Don't be fancy, Pigeon.

She hates when he calls her that.

We spend the rest of the night

trying to rhyme words with *Pigeon*,

our lips move like slugs

around the sounds:

religion, glisten, ribbon...

William E. Stobb

Poem for My Punch

Tonight it's a so-sad instance
of something-I-see-makes-me-feel
-okay: nearly
whole that white
reflection of our hot remnant
lays cotton shimmer on
chairs in wet grass man
in the moon
that's hilarious

I've got children
dreaming misty forests
on second floor
a woman says
she'll never stop
loving me

my brother
some boy
held me down 'til I swung
man I could
not sleep after I can't sleep now I
feel real real I
feel one hot circle this
heat is some sun inside

Erica Fabri

The Night of Great Shapes

I placed a fern between my breasts,
asked you to name *that* shape:
a wood bridge.
me from the back?: *a dancing shoe*.
me bent over?: *a church bell*.
me making love?: *two can-openers*.
me in the mud?: *a tattooed hand*.
as you fall to sleep you demand:
now, name me a shape, a very quiet one.
this is it:
you, India, topless last summer, laid out
over the armchair like a wet dress,
under that metal fan,
trying to cool.

Pris Campbell

Those Lovesick Swallows

Just when you're sure
the moon isn't going to fall
and no parallel universe
will open, the Indians
and the buffalo wandering beneath
unpolluted skies once again,
he walks back into your life,
spins it around.
He kisses your mouth,
suckles your breasts
and carries you to where
pain can no longer follow,
to where those crazy lovesick
swallows from Capistrano
fold wings around you,
and the juke plays oldies
all day.

William E. Stobb

Failed Movie

After late driving
beam-riddled in my mind and through my chest.
The way headlights adrift
from the freeway swept the pasture plain
I had this feeling
a recently harvested steaming field
glimpsed through light stray from travel.
I stopped and tried
to capture on digital
what rapid candles of industry were making me.
Parked at the end
of a ramp past Fargo
I walked to the center of the overpass.
Wait. Air. Stars
visible through gaps in silver clouds.
After a while, a van and motorcycle
approached from two miles out.
I shot a full minute
but it doesn't show, really.
You hear the wind rush and the trim engines pass.
You see for a moment
light trails
too pixilated
and green glare off the sign that says one
hundred to the border.
I felt perforated-honeycombed and waning.
I shot my face for five counts.
My eye made one white circle.

I didn't expect to see you here again

Us? Just visiting. Kicked clay dust.

But what about you? The child's face is dirty. Whitney's fat and her lipstick's bleeding. You still take peanuts in your pop? His belt buckle's the size of my palm. Jesus changed my heart when I had my baby. Look—he's got Redneck tattooed on his bicep in Garamond. Run in there and get me them menthols and lottery tickets.

The door squeals open and I smell Frito pie and air conditioning. For a while he made good money laying asphalt, working for the county. We sure do miss having you and your pretty wife in our church family. Bodean, leaning on the rust-furred pump, doesn't remember calling me skank in high school. They were making meth in the trailer house and it caught on fire—all those babies!

Whitney has three babies, Holly has two, and, it's a shame, but Renee turned lesbian up in Tulsa.

Pantoum on an Ant

Shane
Allison

I just killed an ant.
I watched it crawl up the wall
Before I brushed it to the floor,
Stepped on it and pulled it in half.
I watched it scurry up the wall.
It was a big insect
So I stepped on it and pulled it in half.
They must be coming from where it's wet
Those big bugs
Biting into thrown away food
Coming from where it's wet
Building big nests
Carrying thrown away food
Back to their babes
Living in big nests.
It struggles for life with a torn off abdomen
Tries to get back to its babes.
I feed what is left to my pet house spider
It struggles for life without an abdomen
Trying to get away.
I feed what is left to my pet spider
That pulls it by the head
As it tries to get away
Desperately attempting not to get eaten.

O

C

H

Lee Herrick

SLOWNESS

O

You in the white. Think of slowness—how acolytes
fawn over rebels in the arts, as if it were new, or post, post, post.
What if we were nothing more than a comedy of wit and three letter words:
you, arc, fan
letters from four readers in Boise whose lives, like ours, are not slow enough.
The new language—scroll, forward, MP3= see that mirage?
The new school forgets the buddhists' distance from desire.
The monks I saw in Laos walked in a line near the Mekong.
You in the white. Do you think of me? Do you know how far
This will go? Do you know how slow a good prayer feels?

The Girlfriend Olympics

Richard Peabody

The girlfriend who tried to feed me placenta soup.

The one I thought was faking it. I said, "You don't have to carry-on like that with me." I wanted honesty. And of course I was crushed when she seemed bored and unresponsive from then on.

The girlfriend who never wore panties. Corduroys with holes in the crotch.

The girlfriend who spent one hour in the bathroom every morning-doing her makeup.

The girlfriend who never kissed me. Not once.

The wannabe girlfriend who had so many cockroaches in her apartment during the day that I was afraid to be there after dark. She didn't believe in harming living things.

The girlfriend who became a Zen Buddhist.

The girlfriend I almost proposed to. I was on my way over to do the deed when I ran into a buddy. But when I got there she picked a fight over something trivial the minute she opened the door. When my buddy saw her the following morning, and was just about to congratulate her, she blew up about what an asshole I was. To this day she has no idea.

The painter girlfriend who had so many flies in her apartment that it was like a horror movie set.

The girlfriend who goofed and called me "Larry" in bed.

The girlfriend who only pooped in her own bathroom.
Which made a weekend at the beach a very iffy proposition.

The girlfriend who had a tongue like a cat's. Rough and sandpapery like that. Sigh.

The girlfriend who never wore panties and liked to wear my jeans.

The second girlfriend that became a Zen Buddhist.

The girlfriend who was retroactively jealous of every woman who came before her.

The girlfriend who had a giggle exactly like Marilyn Monroe's.

The girlfriend whose parents were cooler than she was.

The girlfriend who had recently totaled two cars before we had our first date and then threw a tantrum when I wouldn't let her borrow my car.

The third girlfriend who became a Zen Buddhist.

The girlfriend who made love to me, then after I passed out walked across the street to fuck her lover, and then a few hours later woke me by trying to get me interested again. Which might have been OK if I had a stuffed up nose or a cold and didn't smell him.

The girlfriend who met me and a buddy at the door completely naked.

Richard Peabody The Girlfriend Olympics

The girlfriend whose voice I liked so much I forgot where I parked my car in Georgetown. Which might have been OK if she hadn't gotten so angry about it.

The girlfriend who disappeared when I couldn't pay the check on a lunch date because they didn't take my credit card. Mea culpa, but I was young and it never happened again.

The girlfriend who wanted to dress me up in her clothes, makeup, the works.

The girlfriend who told me my fiction sucked.

The girlfriend who said my writing was filled with clichés.

The girlfriend who nicknamed me "Little Lemur."

The girlfriend who spent an hour in the bathroom every night—removing her makeup.

The girlfriend who said—Choose between me and your books.

The girlfriend whose roommate would come into her room while we were making love and kneel at the foot of the bed and cry hysterically.

Touch me. Don't you want to be a Zen Buddhist, too?

Amy King

A SOLUTION TO SCIENCE, IN PART

The thin portrayals were leaving me parched,
and time was the only game the children bothered
to feed on anymore. A disappearing ink fell upon us,
even without our blotters at the ready,
so that not all hours passed as clouds into
the shortening shadows;
the rare ones stuck to our ribs, by our sides,
and gave us weight. Our feet held firmly to dirt
while our heads dreamed of escape in flight.

And just like that: every special simulacra wanted
its fifteen minutes of fame;
the scorpion threw out the dead guinea pig
in disgust, its only love sacrificed at the behest
of these earthbound breasts, this arm, that sky.
There should have been more images among us,
ones that could mislead the witness
on his search for the latest benched inebriation,
but boxes began arriving, filled with
a human electricity that would light the moon's night.

Bob Marcacci

in the afternoon when there are flies in the kitchen
living on their last legs as broken toys
eventually in the mouth of the cat
who talks to me in his talk about the black bug
he's watched for who knows how long
trying the window endlessly

14 Young Women

john korn

14 young women outside of a rodeo
huddled into a crowd
facing one another
lighting their cigarettes
off each other's cigarettes
none had a lighter
there was only one match

they inhale and exhale
precisely at the same moment
and 14 tobacco puffs
form one dark hanging cloud
over these 14 young women

and one says, "Oh! did you see
his lasso?"
and gasps run through the group
like a flopping chicken in a barn
full of bobcats.
yes they all had seen his lasso
another says, "his lasso!"
and sighs steam from 14 young mouths
yes his lasso

a thick one with smooth breasts
stomps her foot down
"never!" she says, "never do I meet
a man like that!" and she goes on to
describe the rodeo man
and from her description
the man she is trying to illustrate
is Albert Einstein.
She finishes by saying,
"His intellect with that lasso!"
and groans explode across this group.
yes they had all noticed the intellect
and how they'd love to meet a man
with intellect.

a tall gloomy one steps forth and
describes the rodeo man as
Evil Knievel
"the daring with his lasso!" she cries
and the moans ripple through them
in agreement
and on and on they describe the rodeo man
the bravery
yes yes
the security
the knowing
the ape like phallus

"yes!" one screams, "to be fucked
on a staircase while he bangs my head
into a splintery step!"

the tenderness!
"yes," the same one spits, "to be caressed
so lightly that he is barely touching me!"

the vulnerability!
"yes! to step on his head
and throw tacks at his nuts!"

the adventure! in his lasso
the domestication in his lasso
the punctuality of his lasso
the practicality of his lasso
the staggering rationale
yes yes they agree and tremble
in 14 different ways

why could they not meet a man like this?

and the smoke cloud above their heads
begins to form the shape of this rodeo man
in hat and in spurs, riding on top
of a brilliant steed. this vapor man
that dumps unending quivering loads
of desire into their hearts
they nearly sing head back and chin up
at this apparition...

but then

the thick one with smooth breasts shushes them
and they all look to the left in unison
as the real rodeo man, done with his night's performance
exits the side gate and slowly staggers over
his jeans are covered in horse shit
he pulls a chewed up cigar from his front pocket
and asks if one lady would happen to have a light.
all 14 women move in with the ends of
their cigarettes pushed together
the rodeo man lights his cigar from this.

"shucks," he says, "I think some of this horse shit
on my pants here might be my shit! no joke.
I can't wait to get home and eat some cheerios.
ever see that movie with the man and he's a robot
from the future and he gotta help this lady and at the
end he shoots that helicopter?"

no woman of the 14 speak. they smile and nod quickly
one sweats. another bites her bottom lip.

"Well thanks for the light ladies, and thanks for coming
to the show!" he says and walks off to his car.

silence... then all woman pull out another cigarette
and light it off a butt of a dying one.
the tall gloomy one steps forth
"oh! did you see his spurs!"
oh they scream and claw
the erotic angelic wisdom of his spurs!!

Grace Cavalieri *Infidelity*

The woman inquired what my husband wore
When he went boating. How
he kept his face out of the wind. I was
puzzled, trying to recall.
Sunglasses? A baseball cap? I—
I don't know—I pondered, (And why do I have to give
exactly what is asked, I thought.)
Well! Weren't you in the boat?
Or were you reading and writing?
Didn't you ever notice?
I tried to picture his face to the sun, the rain.
I think he weathered it well, enjoyed it, even.
The car went up a steep mountain -
a razor sharp path with only thin railings
to hold us to the road -
Although she was in the back seat with my husband.
when the driver started up, gunning the motor,
in spite of the danger, I had to close my eyes.

Marsupial Moon

Daryl Rogers

Driving home at late night, under
a saw-toothed, crescent smile,
the road darkened with cold, greasy rain.
Fallen brown and colored leaves
litter the surface of the highway like
moths with broken wings and limbs.
My tires bark when I hit the driveway.
The garbage can is overturned at the curb.
Going to retrieve it I duck under our
Japanese Maple and its frail branches
nod and weave in the wind like elderly
dinosaurs with star-shaped scales.
The rain dripping from the their leaves
is an icy sweat, heavy as motor oil.
The rain should end in the morning.
The TV show Six Feet Under is coming on.
I fill a tumbler with cracked ice,
vodka and olives, start a fire with wood
scavenged from the last, devastating
ice storm back in February 2003.
The dogs are breathing hard and barking
at a opossum creeping out of the woodpile.
I set up a trip-cage in the backyard
and bait it with peanut butter.
Tomorrow we'll take the grinning, palsied
little rat to a nature preserve by the river.

Bob Marcacci

i see myself in the chandelier; you in those shoes; you
can never have enough; ballroom feel; starhang
from the ceiling; we danced somewhat; never never
enough gin; the moon rose over the balcony; we smoke
on the steps; obscure away from formality;
as if you were talking to me; the way you were;

OCHO

ask your mama if you can walk me
to the store, she'd plead, her upturned palms
beneath my flattened hands, bouncing them,
my wrists slack, our backs slumped, our sighs loud.
trapped in my backyard all afternoon,
we'd done everything there was to do.
i'd stall with silence, already sure
what my mom would say. if julie were
out of earshot: *and why do you two
need to go up there? all those big ol'*
*boys hanging around. just asking for
trouble. hmpf. that gal can't do a thing*
*without wanting to go switch her tail
in front of some man.* if julie were
with me, a glaring *no*. under frowns
and baby-fied disgrace, i was glad.
my mama saved me from the gauntlet
of gazes and questions i could not
answer, the low-pitched laughter that left
me needing to pee. those high school boys,
with round fros sprouting black plastic fists,
planted in the hot parking lot for
hours to smoke and shoot the shit – they had
little use for stuttering crushes,
which were all i dared offer. i whined
mama to a frenzy, claiming deep,
unbearable cravings for icees,
candy bars, or chips, but rarely got
the okay to go, and never with
julie, who was simply *too fast. that*
*girl is going to end up soon with a
baby, mark my words.* i'd quiet down,
wondering if trouble hung from those
flourishing brown boys like something ripe
you couldn't help but pick, or if it
grew somewhere inside a girl like an
idea, voracious, wild with hunger,
wondering who was asking for it.

Michael- Earle Carlton

I ONCE HAD A NAME

You and I danced naked in champagne-filled fountains: our favoured being Trevi, which spilled liquid time with soft ease. Together, we rushed gathered pigeon flocks, freshly settled within St. Mark's Square. On fleeing, each bird cooed blasphemous words at us from atop the Basilica's crown. Quietly, unrecognized, madness crawled through my fragile being like a dying worm. You closed your eyes. To open them, I splashed poems of love in bold, black letters on the peeling, painted border of our decadent hotel suite. You became even more distant, almost invisible. No longer the dry martini who once tethered my tower. As young lovers, we had conquered Italy and France, skipping imperfect pebbles along the latter's rocky shores, where elephants long ago trampled distant mountain slopes. We held hands in sweet innocence, more like my father, with child, until that day you removed me from sanctuary of his home. I still remember your last visit, made before I was left behind by you, nameless and alone. My name is Zelda. You were, and remain, the only love from that stolen childhood

Lorna Dee Cervantes

Diego Quiros

How to Overload your Senses

Grab a dollar bill. Or two.
There's an alternate soundtrack
to the Wizard of Oz called
Dark side of the moon.
Mute the movie, start the music
when the lion begins the third roar.
Taste beer 1. Watch. Listen. Listen.

Breath. Dorothy falls into the pig pen,
watch her race towards an early grave
Taste beer 2.

Time. The witch rides her bike.
Listen. Alarm clocks ring.
Taste beer 3.

Money. Grab your dollar bill. Smell it.
Rub it between your fingers. Feel it.
Glinda, hovers on her bubble,
don't give me that do goody good bullshit.

Us and Them. Black and Blue.
Two witches, who knows which is which.
Taste beer 4.

Taste beer 5.
Taste beer 6.

Brain damage. Feel it.
The scarecrow, the lunatic
is on the grass.
Dorothy's ear is on the Tin Man's chest.
Listen to his heart.
Listen.

How to Overload Your Senses

after Keros

That night in the crusted theater
the dark flickered against your glowing face,
your angel's grace, rare for a full grown boy,
was crisping in the shadows. You and me
willing the Wizard of Oz onto the Dark
of the Moon, the smell and feel
of a dollar bill musting in the use.
A six pack between us. A tight joint
rusting out of repair, a sound dancing
on a lark, a rocking the baby to sleep.
Already, then, you were falling. Pink Floyd
couldn't save you. The leaking dopa erupting
into fists on the car, a kick to the wheel
of love; a draping of hardness over the windows.
Then, the witch was riding her bicycle away.
I overshadowed you shadowing you down
some alley of disrepair, some back lot
of the self where your reds blotched out
the blues and any blues was an excuse to party.
Was I the evil one? Tired of stomping on
Glenda, never shining like that part
you were born to play. You and I, a photograph,
a negative in relief. Your white blond curly hair/
my straight black mane, my witch's costume.
At the third lion's roar courage comes alive,
a soundtrack begins and a poetry lives
in the layers. The rolled bill in white tight knuckles.
The constant pass. The talking into nothing.
The talking back. Your anger, heaving.
My fallacy of desire, an overload of senses.
No sense in going back, of folding in on
ourselves like this unspent one.
Every time I dare to touch it, it lives
more and more skinlike, slough from touch.
I put my mouth to it and Dorothy
falls into a pit. The ruby shoes
belong to another. The great house
of the senses falls into place
and I exit; expunge; my listening ear
frozen to the Tin Man's chest.

The Red Porsche and The Model

I went to the DC Commission On The Arts in 1968, and asked for a Grant to buy myself a maxi-coat, they were in fashion then and so was I, with four children, behind me and a manuscript to tuck in my hem, they asked if I were some kind of housewife-artist, although being called an artist is like being called a child, the child doesn't know she is one, she just thinks she's a person, but in the end they gave me enough to buy stamps and so my career began.

Now I prayed to the angels of funding, saying ***should I bring Art and joy to the world?*** They said Hell No, Just Try To Get Through The Damn Thing, and so I went out again, this time to the NEA, where I was told all I needed was to get a tall beautiful model who looked like a Goddess, to drive a red Porsche into the reflection pool, and come out the other end, where I would hold up my right hand and we could call that performance art , all went well but for the thumb, leaking and bleeding, stitched from the tendons, held up in position, over time, so it would look good, acceptable and perfect when pulling through each artful day, but lucky for me the oozing added red, making everything brighter and better,

I went to the NEH and said I was a scholar, and I could ***escape the moment*** as well as anyone, but they asked that I ***manage*** the moment instead, that is when I saw I was still an artist because I ***imaged*** the moment, by accident, they said that the door you do not ***want*** to go through is the one you ***must***, and it will lead you here, from any direction, STOP I said, if there is no money, what I will not take from you is comfort, and I buttoned my maxi coat and left,

The song of the soul, was at The Library of Congress, I was in The House of Memory, where all spirits are sent back to earth to work out their vibrations, and I was told, until then I should stretch my eyes, they also said words represent meanings, and if I stole a book, not to expect thanks for it, No Funding is what I think they meant, but that marble, well I loved it,

If language Is used to tell people what you think It is best to say nothing when at The Poetry Foundation, where they said I must be a woman before I die, and to try being a prostitute or a writer, I asked how would I know which I am, adding that in Maine they paint barns, but that doesn't make the farmer a painter, they answered, you may never know, my child,

If you love what you hate, you will not have to hate it anymore, I love the poverty of poetry, I have always loved poetry, the poverty took practice, poems are the bones of God, the flesh we leave to others, perhaps we should not ask for more.

a meme-poem

David Raphael Israel

Every word of the poem could be a meme!
particularly its multisyllabic expressions
you could make a meme out of saying "hey you seem..."
and might it be memish to wallow in weird digressions?

if the definition is just an infectious phrase
is the poem that features memes conceived as source
or repository? I'll admit I'm still in a haze
of course there's the fine adverbial meme "of course"

an urban legend is thought of as quintessentially
a meme that runs around with virulent zeal
a sheepish meme might sniffle penitentially
its teardrop-memes informing us how it feels

"I had a dream" is a meme from M.L. King
"Irene goodnight" is a folkmeme one might sing

A Possible Future Cover Dog

**Horace
Carlton**



Michael-Earle Carlton

JUST ONE MORE TIME

Brother called long distance late last night,
his vapor-thin words floating in high air, as
if he were caught in stormy, whispered winds
of his own emotion. Each sentence curved,
swooping over and through separating miles,
sinking ever deeper into secret crevices.
For an instant, he was Sisyphus attending
anger, twisting non-sensical words into
private rhythms of maddened non-reason.
I listened, hearing nothing, until his choleric
cooled, before understanding his wild
irritation. He, on having today solemnized
sixty-eight years of age, fourteen minutes
past midnight, mentally restored repeated
nightmares of his broken youth: he was now
alone: too frightened at being called "old man."

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